Saint Paul Planning Commission City Hall Conference Center 15 Kellogg Boulevard West

Minutes November 1, 2013

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, November 1, 2013, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.

Commissioners

Present:

Mmes. Merrigan, Noecker, Perrus, Reveal, Shively, Thao, Wang, Wenel; and Messrs. Connolly, Edgerton, Gelgelu, Lindeke, Makarios, Nelson, Ochs, Oliver,

Schertler, Spaulding, Ward and Wickiser.

Commissioners

Absent:

Ms. *Porter.

*Excused

Also Present:

Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Merritt Clapp-Smith, Jake Reilly, Hilary, Holmes, Bill Dermody, Scott Tempel, Jamie Radel, Mike Richardson, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Approval of minutes October 18, 2013.

MOTION: Commissioner Reveal moved approval of the minutes of October 18, 2013. Commissioner Merrigan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

II. Chair's Announcements

Chair Wencl had no announcements.

III. Planning Director's Announcements

Donna Drummond announced that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is restarting the Mississippi River Critical Area rulemaking process that was put on hold at the end of 2010, when DNR didn't meet the deadline established by the state legislature. The rule making process was very controversial at the time. The 2013 legislature reauthorized the rulemaking process so the DNR has picked up where it left off with the draft rules and has been meeting with staff from the cities in the Critical Area over the late summer early fall to get comments and suggestions on the draft rules. DNR will restart the public rulemaking input process shortly, meeting with property owners, stakeholders and various interest groups. This informal input process will be followed by a formal process with a public hearing and recommendation to the governor. At some point in 2014 DNR will likely inform all of the cities to update their Critical Area (River Corridor) regulations to be consistent with these new rules.

IV. Zoning Committee

SITE PLAN REVIEW – List of current applications. (Tom Beach, 651/266-9086)

One item came before the Site Plan Review Committee on Tuesday, October 29, 2013:

■ Northern Metals End of Life Vehicle Facility at 521 Barge Channel Road.

NEW BUSINESS

#13-239-519 Feline Rescue Inc. — Change of nonconforming use from elevator service with workshop to office/meeting & storage with a cat intake room and sick cat isolation rooms. 600 Fairview Avenue N, NE corner at Thomas. (Bill Dermody, 651/266-6617)

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the change of legal nonconforming use. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#13-235-708 David and Robin Brown — Reestablishment of nonconforming use as a duplex. 1685 Lincoln Avenue, NE corner at Cambridge. (*Scott Tempel*, 651/266-6621)

Commissioner Ward said that at the hearing there was a large number of neighbors who signed the petition in favor, but was there any opposition?

Commissioner Nelson replied no, there was no one there who spoke in opposition to this application and there were a number of letters that were in favor in addition to the petition.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the re- establishment of legal nonconforming use subject to an additional condition. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

13-236-068 O'Reilly Automotive Stores Inc. – Rezone from VP Vehicular Parking to B2 Community Business District. 1653 – 1659 Huron Street, between Larpenteur and Idaho Avenue West. (Jamie Radel, 651/266-6614)

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the rezoning. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#13-239-537 AT & T (Skyline Building) — Conditional use permit to install 9 cell antennas. 633 Robert Street South, between King and Baker. (Jake Reilly, 651/266-6618)

Commissioner Ochs asked if there were a condition or restriction to the distance that an antenna or similar structure can protrude from the exterior of the building. He sees a limitation on the height but not the distance horizontally.

Jake Reilly, PED staff said that the applicant must conform to the uniform building code and hypothesized that physics would limit the distance from a building an antenna could protrude horizontally.

Commissioner Ochs said that he does not see any issue with the AT&T antennas but he did not see that come up in the list of conditions or requirements, and asked what would preclude someone from extending a 10-foot antenna directly outward.

Commissioner Merrigan said that they have approved cell phone towers and antennas based on their similarity to other uses and using conditions from the regulations regarding those similar uses. She stated that these are all vertical items therefore something sticking out of a building horizontally wouldn't be similar enough. However, she doesn't believe that there is any provision in the code that says you can't go out however far except if it conflicts with the setback requirement in some way. Merrigan surmised that the City doesn't have a parameter for that sort of horizontal item because the approvals of antennas, windmills and cell towers are based historically on other kinds of buildings or types of uses that are vertical. If there is still concern in the future then the commission might want to address that.

Chair Wencl said that if the applicant was thinking about extending an antenna horizontally from a building, then they would likely have a freestanding antenna.

Commissioner Nelson stated, regarding setbacks, that the antenna would need to conform to the setback requirements of the district. That would be the overriding factor at this point, regarding how far you can extend toward the property line, he said.

<u>MOTION</u>: Commissioner Nelson moved the Zoning Committee's recommendation to approve the conditional use permit. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

#13-240-134 Brett Ripley – Reestablishment of nonconforming use as a 4 plex. 1685 Taylor Avenue, between Aldine and charlotte. (Jamie Radel, 651/266-6614)

Commissioner Nelson announced that this case has been laid over to the November 7, 2013 Zoning Committee meeting.

Commissioner Nelson announced the items on the agenda for the next Zoning Committee meeting on Thursday, November 7, 2013.

V. <u>Community Plan Roadmap</u> – Informational presentation by Andrew Tran, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota.

Merritt Clapp-Smith, PED staff, briefly explained how the Community Plan Roadmap project was conceived and combined with a similar project of Macalester-Groveland, resulting in the study to be presented today by CURA researcher Andrew Tran.

Andrew Tran, Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota, said the project was a collaboration between the University of Minnesota, MacGroveland Community Council and the City of Saint Paul; it was an opportunity to understand how communities and district councils operate within the context of city planning and how the City operates with the district councils and communities. The project was organized by first understanding best practices in neighborhood planning at a national level and then evaluating practices at the local level through focus groups and interviews with community organizations and observation of local planning efforts. The information and observations informed areas for growth and what tools would help

both the City and the district councils communicate with and improve the community planning process.

Afton Martens, MacGroveland Community Council, said that they were excited to work with Andrew because they needed someone that was visual, creative and understood planning and engagement. Community engagement in planning is not a small undertaking - you have to be able to understand the technical aspects of community planning while being able to engage the community in it and explain its purpose. Andrew helped develop a training brochure for district council members and neighbors to use in community planning engagement, so that outreach could have a broader impact than what District Council and City staff are able to do on their own. The goal is to have the community itself engaging those around them. In this way and through special community events and a large survey, Mac-Groveland has reached more people than in past planning efforts. If you want to engage the community about community planning the last thing you want to talk about are dull aspects of a community plan. You want to make it fun and visual. When it comes to district councils, the planning process is not a simple process. They need it described in a manner that can be grasped by all district council staff and by board leaderships so they can help translate that to the community. The Community Plan Roadmap and other tools that Andrew identified will help this happen.

Andrew Tran added that it is important to ask questions that solicit input from all populations in the community. For instance, he observed a tension between homeowners and students in Mac-Groveland. Engagement should reach everyone and through input provide insight into legacy issues such as differences in perspective between long-time owners, renters, students and transient populations.

Commissioner Ward asked if there were any revelations that came out of the study, that were either new or not part of best practices from elsewhere. He asked if Andrew tracked who he included in the data collection and who he might have missed but wanted to reach.

Mr. Tran said it is very helpful to involve community members who are tapped into and observing daily life and different activities in the community. They may see or learn about populations or groups that aren't commonly known and be able to suggest ways to connect to them. A boots on the ground approach of community planning can be very effective.

Ms. Martens replied that they want to engage people who live, work, learn and play in the neighborhood and understand their interests. She found that it is really difficult to engage renters, and they have not done as good of a job as they would like to engage students, so they are still figuring out how to address that. They will also be looking at race and other demographic information and compare that to who they have engaged to understand how representative the input is and where to direct extra outreach. Their goal is to engage about 10% of the neighborhood -- there are about 20,000 people in the MacGroveland neighborhood, so they want to engage 2,000 or more and have them be as representative as possible, with a focus on who has been underrepresented in the past.

Commissioner Noecker said that she is on a district council and is eager for them to get their hands on the "Roadmap" report. She would also like to see a comparable study and report on plan implementation tools.

Mr. Tran said the report is available on CURA website, as well as on the City's web site under Neighborhood Plans.

Mr. Tran said that implementation is essential to make a plan successful, and depends on how well the implementation strategy is set up and executed. There was a student who worked with District 3 (WSCO) that developed a series of indicators to tract the success of neighborhood strategies.

Ms. Clapp-Smith said that City staff are working with district councils to see plans as action strategy documents to guide neighborhood activities and priorities after the plan is adopted.

Commissioner Spaulding said when thinking long term, most district councils have an established board and system that some constituents are not comfortable serving on. If you want to engage a broader base of people, district council boards may need to change the way they think about their role and how they operate.

Ms. Martens said that board meetings and committees are really valuable, but are not the only way to interact with the community. They need to get out more and interact with people where they are living, working and playing. She would like to work with Andrew to create some type of kiosk or traveling tool that can move around the community and show the preliminary plan to solicit additional feedback. There is also an opportunity to work with one of the City's artists-in residence to develop interactive and playful ways to engage with the community. There are lots of other community councils that they are learning from that are already doing cool stuff.

Commissioner Spaulding asked how they'll address shifting the culture and expectations of the district council board.

Ms. Martens said they must talk on a regular basis about -- what does it mean to be a board member; how much of a time commitment is it; what are the expectations? Some people may be more appropriate as a board member and others as a general volunteer – what is the difference and how can people be more effective in the role they choose?

Commissioner Connolly said that if you want to get out in the community, try to harness the book/wine clubs as a place to talk about community stuff. Ms. Martens concurred and said that many kinds of group or gatherings can be a place to talk about neighborhood issues.

Commissioner Edgerton asked how this information will be shared with the other district councils.

Mr. Tran replied that they have been aware of this the process and invited to participate. He has also made a big effort to make himself present at any meeting where he would have an opportunity to talk about this, such as the recent District Councils executive directors meeting. A copy of the report has been sent to all district councils and posted on the City's website. The district councils just need to be aware that these tools exist and make an effort to use them.

Ms. Clapp-Smith, said that neighborhood planning staff will discuss the report and use it as a resource in their work with district councils.

Commissioner Nelson asked what the "four key questions" are the report references.

Ms. Martens said the four questions are Keep, Improve, Stop and Start (KISS) -- What do you love about your neighborhood that is important to **Keep?** What should be **Improved? Stopped?** and **Started?**

Commissioner Thao said that on the implementation side you have to build ownership of the strategies to pursue them. It is critical to get people to own it, otherwise it's just a plan that sits on the shelf and on the City's website. To help build ownership, you should check back with people often and give them information about how their input was helpful, what priorities emerged, and how they can play a role in implementation.

Mr. Tran said they heard from communities that they often don't know what happens after all the engagement. He agrees that you have to go back into the community and say 'this is what we heard, is it accurate, and is there anything you want to add?' District councils should continuously collect this information at all their activities and events and communicate them back in various ways.

Commissioner Schertler said that planning conversations between communities and the City need to happen in both directions. If something the community wants to do requires a municipal role, then it's the responsibility of the municipality to communicate what's feasible. Communities shouldn't be left to develop unrealistic plans that can't be implemented. There should be some steps identified that make clear the City role in providing input and feedback as plans develop.

Commissioner Reveal said that this has applicability way beyond district councils, zoning, and land use issues. It could apply to a process for community health plans or a dozen other things and there would be wide interest. PED should share this process and engagement model with other City agencies and non-profits, because there are so many people that either by federal rules have to go through community processes or choose to. If would also be very helpful for this to get incorporated into the curricula of not just public policy but social work, medicine and a few other things where this kind of outreach is required.

Commissioner Edgerton suggested that one thing to think about, especially with limited resources, is identifying community activities that are easy to accomplish. You need to build on small successes to get to bigger ones; through the easy ones you can build momentum and critical mass to take on the big things.

Commissioner Schertler commented that it's important to know the elements of a strong community and how it can come together to accomplish something. Phalen Boulevard would be an example of where a community was able to gather and apply pressure for good results. What made that agenda strong was a combination of stakeholders -- bankers, community employers, public sector, school district, etc. – there were people involved who had the ability to exert force and do so more effectively by working together.

VI. Comprehensive Planning Committee

Commissioner Merrigan announced that at their last meeting they discussed bringing forward a zoning text amendment and a request for a public hearing at the next Planning Commission meeting regarding transit streets and some parking requirements to make them more consistent with the code. Their next meeting will be on Tuesday, November 12, 2013.

VII. Neighborhood Planning Committee

Commissioner Oliver announced that the next Neighborhood Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday, November 6, 2013 has been cancelled.

VIII. Transportation Committee

Commissioner Spaulding announced that at their last meeting they met on the corner of University and Raymond Streets with Al Czaia from the Department of Public Works, who led them on a walking tour of the West Midway to view recent sidewalk improvements that have been done to make better connections from the light rail corridor to area businesses. Al led them through the constraints, challenges and successes of building new sidewalks in a long established City environment that has a lot of topographic issues.

Commissioner Spaulding also announced the items on the agenda for the next Transportation Committee meeting on Monday, November 4, 2013.

IX. Communications Committee

No report.

X. Task Force/Liaison Reports

Commissioner Reveal announced that the West Side Flats Task Force will be meeting on Wednesday, November 6, 2013 at the (NeDA) Neighborhood Development Alliance office to review the first draft of the updated West Side Flats Master Plan and Development Guidelines.

XI. Old Business

None.

XII. New Business

None.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary Planning and Economic Development Department, City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Drummond Planning Director Approved December 6, 2013

(Date)

Daniel Ward II

Secretary of the Planning Commission

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